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## Foot-in-Mouth Disease

✓ The Central Intelligence Agency, backed by the National Security Agency, has been caught with its foot in its mouth again. This awkward position is deplorable in any event, but it is twice to be deplored in the case of agencies which could play a vital role in the international cloak-and-dagger market if they were run judiciously.

Their latest affront to the democratic process is the successful maneuver, uncovered by The Christian Science Monitor, to remove from the U.S. Senate calendar a scheduled debate on a bill designed to protect Federal employees from police-state intrusion. It is the so-called "Right to Privacy bill" sponsored by 54 senators who are appalled at the CIA-NSA technique of "strapping an applicant (for employment) to a machine and subjecting him to salacious questioning" to determine whether he would or would not be a "security" risk.

✓ Sen. Sam J. Ervin (D-N.C.), chief sponsor of the bill, points out that the Federal Bureau of Investigation does not resort to such tests in hiring its staff and overseeing employee conduct because it knows that such tests are not foolproof in sifting truth from falsehood and because other and acceptable techniques are available for testing the character, rep-

utation and capacity of job applicants.

"The basic premise of the bill," says Sen. Ervin, "is that employees of the Federal government sell their services, not their souls. The idea that a government agency is entitled to 'the whole man' and to the most intimate knowledge and control of all the details of his personal and community life, his religious beliefs and sexual attitudes is more appropriate for totalitarian countries than for a society of free men. The questioning process disgusts many applicants and sours some against taking any Federal job."

The CIA and NSA, which spurned all requests to testify before a Senate subcommittee, now demand to be heard by the Judiciary Committee behind closed doors. The request has been denied on the ground that there is already too much secrecy in government, that the public business should be conducted publicly.

A showdown on this issue can come none too soon, for it is even larger than the rights of Federal employees to be treated as American citizens. What is at stake is nothing less than the right of the U.S. Senate to conduct its own affairs, and certainly its own debates, without behind-the-scenes interference, especially from what is essentially a secret police agency.

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